

Access

Introduction

The principle of equal access is an integral part of the library's philosophy and planning. The facility housing library services has direct effect on access and must comply with the regulations of The Americans with Disabilities Act, but access encompasses other aspects. Access refers to making library services and resources as widely available as possible through the location of the library and its hours of operation. Through outreach into the broader community, through electronic access in the library and remotely to collections, and through the use of technology to provide access for persons with disabilities, the library facilitates access to local and remote resources.

Standards

1. The headquarters library or a centrally located branch is open at least 40 hours per week for a full range of services. Hours open are to include at least three consecutive evening hours (after 5:00 p. m.) and appropriate weekend hours.
2. The regular schedule the library is open is clearly posted. Open hours are developed for the convenience of the public and include morning, evening and weekend hours.
3. Every library serving an area of more than 400 square miles, or more than 25,000 people, provides some form of extension or outreach service.



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4. The library, its programs, and its electronic resources are accessible to people with disabilities.
5. A full range of library services is available to the public when the library is open.
6. The library provides appropriate access to library services for specialized populations, including, but not limited to, the homebound, the institutionalized, and non-English speaking populations.
7. The library provides public training in the use of its resources to ensure that all citizens have the necessary skills to take advantage of print and electronic resources.

Essential Guidelines

The library . . .

- Is open 40 hours per week, including at least three consecutive hours after 5 p. m. and appropriate weekend hours.
- Posts the hours of operation at each library facility.
- Develops the library operating schedule for the convenience of the public.
- Provides at least one form of extension or outreach service if it serves more than 400 square miles or more than 25,000 people.
- Provides resources and services for children and young adults during operating hours at library locations.
- Ensures access to resources, services, and programs for people with disabilities.

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- Meets median guidelines for access-related parameters for its planning profile.
- Has a telephone system adequate to meet public and staff needs with the number(s) listed in the local directory.
- Has, or has convenient access to, a photocopier for staff and the public.
- Has, or has convenient access to, a fax machine.
- Has converted and maintains its bibliographic and holdings information into machine readable form using the MARC standard.
- Provides a book return for after-hours return of library materials.

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Aspiring Guidelines

The library . . .

- Exceeds 40 hours of operation per week, offering multiple evening and weekend hours.
- Publicizes hours of operation at library facilities using the media and other community resources.
- Regularly surveys the public on the convenience of library hours of operation and adjusts hours accordingly.
- Provides multiple extension services if it serves more than 400 square miles or more than 25,000 people.
- Provides access to its resources and services for patrons with disabilities through the provision of assistive technology and alternative formats.
- Exceeds median guidelines for access-related parameters for its planning profile.

- Has multiple telephone listings in the white and yellow pages in the local directory. Listings include at least one text telephone (TTY).
- Has appropriate equipment to support access to information in various nonprint formats in its collection (e.g., microform readers/printers, CD players, DVD players).

Excel Guidelines

The library . . .

- Offers remote access to resources and services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- Actively promotes library hours, programs, and remote access as part of its marketing/public relations strategy.
- In its planning process, formally evaluates library hours of operation for library users and non-users and adjusts hours accordingly.
- Identifies the groups and individuals having need for alternative service delivery and develops plans accordingly.
- Provides access to high-end assistive technology, such as assistive reading machines for the visually disabled.
- Meets or exceeds Top Quartile Medians (TQM) for access-related parameters for its planning profile.
- Has a voice-mail system or answering machine that provides basic library information to callers during the times the library is not open.
- Has the equipment to provide access to information and programs

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for groups and/or to support distance learning (VCRs, large screen video projectors, LCD panels, interactive television capabilities).

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